

PARK AND CONSERVATION LANDS
Policy on Use of Parkland and Playing Fields

IT IS THE POLICY OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION:

To encourage the maximum feasible use of Wellesley's open space that is compatible with protection of the Town's considerable investment in playing fields, park landscaping, grass, trees, flowers and shrubs.

1. To keep the Town's playing fields in the best possible condition for athletic use, which is their primary function.
2. To ensure that funds realized from fund-raising events held without fee on public lands under NRC jurisdiction shall be used for charitable or civic purposes in Wellesley.
3. To charge a substantial fee for any fund-raising event held on park or conservation lands, the proceeds of which will not accrue exclusively to charitable or civic purposes in Wellesley.
4. To weigh the public benefits of proposed uses of lands under its jurisdiction against the additional exposure of the Town to liability.
5. To discourage unfair competition to local business firms.
6. To deny permits for uses which interfere with normal and customary uses of an area.

PARK AND CONSERVATION LANDS

General Regulations

THESE REGULATIONS ARE ADOPTED by the Natural Resources Commission pursuant to the authority of MGL Chapter 45 §5 to protect Wellesley's park and conservation lands and to enhance public enjoyment of open space, recreational, and educational opportunities.

Wellesley's parks and conservation lands are Town property administered by the Natural Resources Commission for the benefit of all. Visitors are required to abide by these regulations so that the rights of all are respected. Persons who violate any of these regulations shall be required to leave and shall be subject to all penalties prescribed by law.

1. Hours

Parks and conservation lands are open to the public from sunup to sundown throughout the year. Nighttime use is prohibited except for scheduled use on lighted playing fields.

2. Motor Vehicles Prohibited

Motor vehicles are prohibited except on paved roads and in designated parking areas between sunup and sundown. No overnight parking is permitted. Motorcycles, motor scooters, motor campers, trail bikes, snowmobiles, and any other motor-powered vehicles, except for those used for public maintenance, are prohibited from unpaved areas.

3. Firearms and Traps

Firearms, hunting and trapping are prohibited. Molesting, harassing or injuring wildlife in any way is prohibited. Fishing is permitted in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth.

4. Drugs and Alcoholic Beverages

Possession of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances is prohibited.

5. Dumping and Littering Prohibited

Littering or dumping of grass clippings, leaves, brush, debris or any other material is prohibited. When leaving park or conservation lands, visitors are requested to remove any materials they brought in with them. Voluntary clean-ups are encouraged and appreciated.

6. Pets

Pets must at all times be under the immediate control of the owner or on a leash in order to protect plants, wildlife, and the enjoyment of other visitors.

7. Trees and Plants Protected

Cutting or removing trees or other vegetation is prohibited because trees, shrubs, flowers and groundcovers are essential to wildlife and to the beauty and enjoyment of parks and conservation lands.

8. Firewood

On penalty of law, no wood may be removed for firewood or other purposes from park or conservation lands except with written permission from the Natural Resources office. Stacked firewood from trees taken down by the Department of Public Works may be removed by residents for personal use.

9. Vandalism

Disturbing, removing, defacing, cutting or otherwise damaging a natural feature, sign, barrier, building or other property in park and conservation land is prohibited.

10. Noise

Conduct which disturbs the tranquility of park or conservation lands or which interferes with the enjoyment of others is prohibited. Disturbing conduct includes, but is not limited to, making loud noise audible beyond the immediate area of the source.

11. Camping

Camping is permitted only by permit from the Natural Resources Commission.

12. Open Fires

Open fires are allowed only by permit from the Wellesley Fire Department and from the Natural Resources Commission.

13. Violations

Violations of these regulations shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$25 or more than \$200, as provided by MGL Chapter 45 Section 24. Damages for tree cutting or removal are additional.

PARK AND CONSERVATION LANDS
Special Regulations for Use of Playing Fields

USE OF PLAYING FIELDS

1. Since compaction and "skinning" are severe problems on semi-frozen ground or wet turf, there shall be no active use of playing fields or turfed areas in the spring prior to April 15 or in the fall after Thanksgiving except with the express consent of the Public Works Park & Tree Superintendent.
2. Playing fields shall be posted with signs prohibiting use at times when the fields are too wet to be suitable for play.
3. Activities or events that compact soil shall be avoided on playing fields and areas of good turf. Such activities shall be limited to paved or unturfed areas.
4. Activities or events which may destroy grass, trees or shrubs by skinning, shading, smothering, burning or otherwise shall not be permitted.
5. Activities or events which pose a threat to health or safety during normal use of playing fields or parklands shall be stringently controlled or forbidden.
6. Requests to conduct activities or events which may destroy turf in parks or on playing fields require a written application to the Natural Resources Commission. Such activities or events will be permitted or denied according to the following guidelines:
 - A. The applicant must establish that no other suitable site in Town is available.
 - B. No event may be held during periods of sustained precipitation or when groundwater is high.
 - C. To guarantee prompt restoration of the grounds, the applicant shall present specific plans for cleanup and repair and a performance bond or cash deposit in an amount specified by the Department of Public Works.
 - D. The applicant shall submit satisfactory plans regarding signs, lighting, parking, traffic control, food service, sanitary facilities, and liability insurance.
 - E. Applications must be accompanied by a signed statement that:
 - The Town will be held harmless in case of accident or injury;
 - The applicant will pay all costs of cleanup and repair, secured by a performance bond or cash deposit;
 - That proceeds of the event will benefit local civic or charitable organizations.
7. Copies of permits issued by the Natural Resources Commission shall be provided to appropriate town agencies and officials.
8. Non-compliance with terms of a permit may result in forfeiture of the bond or deposit.
9. The privilege of using public land for organizational purposes may be revoked or withheld in the future if all regulations are not strictly complied with.

PARK AND CONSERVATION LANDS

Permit Procedures for Use of Town Parkland

Permits for the use of town parkland for special events may be issued by the Natural Resources Director or the Natural Resources Commission under the policy guidance stated at the beginning of this chapter. Organizations or individuals wishing to reserve town parkland should request an application form from the Natural Resources office.

Permits are discretionary and take into consideration such elements as impact on land and staff resources, conflicting schedules, hours, traffic and parking management, safety, potential town liability, compatibility with normal and customary uses of an area, etc. Under some circumstances posting of a bond and/or providing a police detail may be required. Some activities may require licensing by the Board of Selectmen or the Department of Health. Some taking place in residentially-zoned districts may require a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Applicants should allocate sufficient time to meet such requirements.